

**3322EM Louisiana Flooding
Mississippi & Atchafalaya River
Basins, May 2011
ESF 11 After Action Report
(AAR)**



Incident Summary

On 13 May 2011 FEMA Region VI mission assigned ESF-11 to support FEMA and the State of Louisiana for Flooding along the Mississippi and the Morganza spillway area. ESF-11 was requested to deploy Desk Officers to cover the RRCC in Denton, TX and the Initial Operating Facility in Baton Rouge, to be in place by May 14th. The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) requested the APHIS Veterinary Services Louisiana Area Emergency Coordinator (AEC) to provide guidance and technical assistance to the LDAF Incident Command. FEMA approved deployment of the AEC under the Federal Operations Support Mission Assignment. Three APHIS personnel deployed and were at assigned locations on May 14th. Additional APHIS personnel were attached to the incident for support to the field personnel. The ESF-11 Coordinator advised partner agencies and others of the activation and began requesting any agency activities related to the flooding. FNS, FSIS and DOI all had little or no response activities during the activation. During the deployment ESF-11 staff assisted LDAF with issuing an advisory regarding potential animal diseases associated with major flooding, assisting with preparations for pet evacuation and sheltering, assessed the potential need for federal assistance to address feral animals and provided guidance and assistance to the LDAF Incident Commander.

Lessons Learned

Things that worked well:

- 1) Support from the APHIS Western Region and HQ. Animal diseases associated with major flooding incidents (e.g. Anthrax) are a public health concern. Within 24 hours of the request, APHIS Western Region staff drafted guidance that was issued as a safety reminder to employees who may be working with animals. This advisory was shared with LDAF and was included in their subsequent advisory to the Veterinary medical profession and to several State agencies. ROSS Dispatchers and the APHIS Mission Assignment Manager also provided timely assistance with dispatching employees and obtaining the APHIS accounting codes to track reimbursable expenses.
- 2) Coordination with FEMA Region VI staff for the Statement of Work (SOW) on the initial mission assignment (MA). FEMA mission assignment staff asked for suggested wording for the SOW and then used this to complete the MA which provides ESF-11 with flexibility to deploy additional staff as an extension of the IMAT, when we are supporting a State partner agency's Incident Command.
- 3) Integrating with and supporting the LDAF Incident Command. The AEC's integration and support to the LDAF Incident Command was very useful and is a good example of applying Incident Command System (ICS) to support a State agency under the Stafford Act. This allowed for federal resources to integrate with State command, while the State retained full control over the operations. The AEC is an Operations Section Chief on one

of the APHIS IMT's so his assistance and guidance during the Incident Action Planning process and tactical decision making were extremely helpful according to the LDAF Incident Commander.

Things that could use improvement:

- 1) APHIS employees must have access to IT support during after-hours and on weekends. The ESF-11 Coordinator had connectivity problems the first morning of the deployment (Saturday, May 14th). APHIS ATAC did not respond to the requests for assistance until Monday morning, May 16th. It is critical for APHIS staff to have IT support during after-hours and weekends when responding to emergencies.
- 2) Resource Ordering:
 - a. The ESF-11 Coordinator (or whoever is ordering resources) should name request a specific employee for deployment only in special circumstances. This will provide the APHIS WR Program Contacts more flexibility and latitude as they decide which program and which employees will be dispatched.
 - b. Resource orders should specify under the "Special Needs" column any critical IT or skill needs (e.g. laptop with wireless capability, proficient with ICS-215's, etc.)
 - c. It was suggested that employees who will be deploying to the incident should contact their IT support prior to actual deployment.
- 3) Be prepared to provide a larger scale of federal support to State partner agencies. Many State agencies are facing budget shortfalls and cutbacks resulting in fewer staff to manage a large-scale incident, specifically with maintaining NIMS compliance. It is mandated for State agencies to utilize ICS as a tool to manage incidents and many of the State agency staff who fill key roles in the ICS (e.g. Planning and Operations Section Chiefs) are critical to maintaining their agency's roles/responsibilities for their mandated work (e.g. inspections of livestock at markets). State partner agencies will likely request federal personnel to augment/support their ICS structure during Stafford Act incidents.
- 4) Streamlining Administrative Procedures:
 - a. Administrative staff and supervisors should consider updating existing Travel Authorizations with the special accounting code once it is received from HQ rather than cancelling authorizations and creating new ones.
 - b. The ICS-225 Incident Personnel Performance Rating form should be issued to APHIS staff prior to their demobilization so they can discuss and complete in-person with their Incident Supervisor.